



CECOM Science & Technology (S&T) Reinvention Lab

Issue 9

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What's Happened?

• A Federal Register Notice was published on June 19, 2001. The Notice formally announced the proposed demonstration project to Congress, employees and the Unions and marked the beginning of a public comment period. Copies of the Federal Register Notice were distributed to all RDE employees at seventeen locations throughout the U.S. A copy of the notice is also available at our website in PDF format.

www.monmouth.army.mil/cecom/rdec/PersDemo/main.html

• On July 12, 2001 a public hearing was held in the Myer Center at Fort Monmouth, NJ. Video teleconferencing links connected employees at Fort Belvoir, VA; Fort Meade, MD; Fort Huachuca, AZ; and Fort Sill, OK. The public hearing provided the opportunity for employees, the Unions and the public to provide comments. Presiding over the hearing was Mr. Kenneth Oprisko, Director of Workforce Relations, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy). A total of eleven individuals offered comments during the hearing, and five written comments were received.

What's Next?

• A second and final Federal Register will be published on 30 Oct 01 and distributed to all RDE employees at their work site. Comments from the public hearing are summarized and addressed in the Overview section of the final Federal Register.

• Phase 1 of the implementation plans are underway at Fort Belvoir, Fort Meade, Fort Sill, and Fort Huachuca. RDEC and SEC employees at these sites will be the first groups to phase into the project. Implementation is scheduled for February 2002.

• Phase 2 will include RDEC and SEC

managers and supervisors at Fort Monmouth. Phase 3 will include everyone else if there is Union agreement.

• Mr. Don Jenkins has been named Associate Director, Personnel Demonstration Project for the Night Vision & Electronic Sensors Directorate.

• On September 28th, Tom Sheehan briefed MG Russ, Commanding General, CECOM and Fort Monmouth on the Personnel Demonstration Project. Ed Thomas, Director SEC and Mark Fuhring, Deputy Director, DCSPER also attended. General Russ expressed his support for the project and was particularly interested in the pay for performance appraisal system. He sees the need to define performance expectations and establish clear and measurable performance objectives as critical to the project. The briefing charts are available on our web site.

• Tom Sheehan has announced his plans to retire, effective 3 November 2001. Mrs. Mari Kovach has been named as the acting Associate Director for Business and Operations, RDEC position through 30 January 02. Ms. Kovach's responsibilities include leadership and oversight for the demo project.

NVESD Personnel Demonstration Project Update

**By Don Jenkins, Associate Director,
Personnel Demonstration Project**

On August 13, 2001, Dr. Milton, Dir, NVESD, announced the formation of a special task force to plan, coordinate and execute the implementation phase of the Demo project for NVESD. I was asked to lead this important effort and enthusiastically accepted. Jeff Fowler, Deputy Director – Operations Division, and Genie Shires – senior management analyst, have also been assigned to the task force. Michelle

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Tomkinson joined us on 1 October on an extended detail as part of her participation in the Executive Leadership Program. In addition, senior level Division personnel have been identified to support and facilitate the implementation. In announcing these changes Dr. Milton stated this was the organization's "number 1 priority in spite of our programmatic challenges".

I think it is important to understand why I accepted this significant challenge. First, I firmly believe that implemented correctly this project will be beneficial for the organization both as a whole and individually. It will enable us to recruit and retain the high caliber personnel necessary for our survival in the future and it will recognize each employee appropriately for their performance. Second, I know that I have true support and commitment to the success of the Demo from our leadership. Third (and the reason I got involved four years ago when the design teams were formulated) is that we have the opportunity to shape "pay for performance" to best suit our type of organization rather than wait and have a generic form implemented for us which I firmly believe will happen Government wide. Both the previous and current administrations have identified "pay for performance" as a necessary change to reshape the workforce and to change policies no longer suited to the modern workplace. The RDEC and SEC have already had significant input into the design of our S&T

Demonstration Project and as the first RDEC Directorate to implement the project, along with elements of SEC, we have the responsibility to lead the way and lay the groundwork for the rest of the RDEC.

We have set February 10, 2002 as the goal for implementation of our S&T Personnel Demonstration Project. We have been working closely with Tom Sheehan, SEC and the appropriate elements within the Command in planning and executing our efforts. We have identified four major areas necessary for a successful implementation – job descriptions, appraisals, training, information gathering and dissemination.

In the first area we have developed functional codes, specialty work codes and have worked closely with the RDEC and DCSPER in developing classification guides and duty descriptions. We are working with Jeff Zovak and his team at SEC in establishing a users group for the automation system to be used for job descriptions and appraisals to provide feedback during their final stages of development and to gain some valuable early experience with the system. We have had Jeff and Tom demonstrate the system to the supervisors at NVESD as well as representatives of SEC from Fort Belvoir and Fort Meade.

In the appraisal area we are focusing our effort on performance benchmarks (standards), performance objectives and element weighting. The benchmarks and objectives are critical towards our goal of fair, accurate and equitable ratings. We have been conducting a thorough scrub of the benchmarks through a special focus group of RDEC and SEC managers and are near completion. We are working to establish guidance and aids in writing meaningful, measurable performance objectives, which reflect an individual's position within their family and pay band. The aids would include examples of "good vs. bad" objectives as well as "phraseology" appropriate for various levels of responsibility and authority.

We are meeting with small focus groups of managers to establish guidelines for element weighting for various job categories using a pair-analysis analytical tool. This process has the managers take each of the performance elements for a particular job (e.g. project

PERSONNEL DEMO

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leader would have the first five elements), compare the elements in pairs and determine which is the most important for that job and how much more important (slightly, strongly, etc.). The exercise has been very beneficial in facilitating discussions among the managers and in providing a basis for the element weights from the managers themselves.

The training modules have been identified and detailed for both supervisors and the workforce as a whole. We are awarding the training requirements to an experienced contractor to develop and deliver the course material.

Finally we have established valuable contacts with key individuals at ARL, AMCOM and ERDC who have already implemented their own demo projects. They have provided us with useful lessons learned and have been very responsive in answering our questions as we go through this process. We have also started focus group meetings with each Division giving them an update on our progress and answering their questions. In addition, Dr. Milton will be conducting a Town Meeting in December focusing on the Demo project. He will address what we can expect, what will be expected from us as well as the "culture change" involved in going from an entitlement culture to a performance culture.

We will continue to work closely with the other RDEC directorates, SEC and the appropriate Command elements towards a successful implementation of the S&T Personnel Demo Project.

Training Plans

The experience of other demonstration projects indicates that training is key. Our counterparts at ARL and the AMCOM have advised us a successful transition will depend on training.

Training modules will be developed with specific learning objectives. Learning objectives will describe the training outcomes for each target audience.

During the first year of the project, employees will receive approximately 20-hours of training to gain an understanding of the goals and objectives of the project, potential career benefits in regard to pay progression and developmental opportunities. Also included will be the employee's role and responsibility in

the performance appraisal process, e.g. getting feedback, documenting accomplishments, maximizing performance reviews, etc.

Managers, supervisors and team leaders will receive approximately 40-hours of training, some of which will be pre-implementation with the balance spread over the first year. In addition to gaining an understanding of the major components of the project, managers and supervisors will be trained in key functions required to implement the project, such as preparing new job descriptions, and developing objective, measurable performance objectives.

The managerial training will also focus on basic performance management skills, for example giving timely and honest performance feedback. This piece of the training is extremely important, as employees will look to their supervisors to explain the new rating process and how their individual contributions will be evaluated and rewarded. Improving the performance management process is a major goal of the demonstration project. The investment in training, and automation tools are evidence of the organizations commitment to this demonstration project and enhancing the quality and professionalism of the RDE workforce.

The Union's Position on the Demo

At Fort Monmouth, there are two unions that represent employees who are potentially covered by the Personnel Demonstration Project. NFFE Local 476 represents the non-supervisory employees in the professional job series, e.g. 855, 854, 1550. Those are series that have specialized education requirements. AFGE Local 1904 represents the non-supervisory employees in the non-professional series, i.e., those that do not specialized education requirement. e.g. 343, 318, 334.

The U.S. Code which governs Personnel Demonstration projects does not allow employees within a bargaining unit to be included in a Demonstration Project if the project would violate a collective bargaining agreement between the agency and the labor organization, unless there is another written agreement with respect to the project between the agency and the organization permitting the inclusion or, if the project is not covered by such a collective bargaining agreement, until there has been consultation or negotiation, as appropriate, by the agency with

the labor organization. (5 USC 4703 (f)) In other words, if a union represents employees, the representing union must sign off on the project before it can be implemented for those employees.

Management at Fort Monmouth invited both unions to negotiate the Personnel Demonstration Project. Both Unions declined to participate.

Mr. John Poitras, President of AFGE Local 1904, contends that the project will diminish accountability of management and encourage favoritism. NFFE Local 476 has maintained that the purpose of the Demonstration Project is to allow greater managerial control and remove and/or redistribute employee entitlements. They have also maintained that the majority of their bargaining unit is not in favor of the Demonstration Project.

FYI - General Pay Increase

On 2 Oct 01, President Bush endorsed a budget proposal that allows total appropriations of \$686 billion for fiscal 2002. The proposal provides more money for defense and education and to cover the cost of natural disasters.

For civil service employees, Bush proposed a 3.6 percent raise, the increase called for under a federal pay formula. But Washington area lawmakers pressed for an additional percentage point so that the civil service raise would be equivalent to the raise planned for the armed forces. The House and Senate have both passed this 4.6% pay raise as part of the 2002 Treasury-Postal Appropriations Bill. If the 4.6 percent raise is then passed by the Congress and signed into law by the President, the 1% difference could be allocated among workers based on where they work, and/or the locality pay some employees receive. That decision will be made in November.

As reported in the Washington Post, a House Republican aide said, "There's definitely a feeling that now is the time to be saluting and applauding federal civilian and military personnel, not dividing them. I think 4.6...is a safe bet, and we're ecstatic about that."

Army S&T Lab Personnel Demonstrations

(Taken from an article that appeared in the July-

Aug 2001 edition of Acquisition Logistics Technology)

The Army Science and Technology (S&T) Reinvention Laboratories have implemented four personnel demonstration projects and are close to adding two additional demo projects.

Currently, the Army has four active personnel demonstration projects, and two other projects are being developed and close to final approval. The four active projects are at the Army Research Laboratory; the Medical Research and Materiel Command; the Aviation and Missile Research, Development and Engineering Center; and the Engineer Research and Development Center. These projects have been designated as wave 1. CECOM and TACOM are both approaching project implementation. They are designated as wave 2.

There are approximately 6,300 employees in wave 1, and about 13,565 additional employees may be included under wave 2. The employees included are not only scientists, but also technicians and administrative personnel.

Two laboratories, the Soldier and Biological Chemical Command and the Simulations, Training and Instrumentation Command, are developing projects and have been designated as wave 3. Approximately 1,400 employees will be included in wave 3.

The demos currently in place go far in answering criticism from the Defense Science Board and others that the current GS system is too slow, puts up administrative barriers, and is impossible to change. The demo projects are attempting to overcome these difficulties by streamlining processes and introducing new flexibilities. The projects have initiated hiring and assignment flexibilities, established broad "pay banding" systems, simplified job descriptions, streamlined classification, replaced the standard Army performance appraisal system with local performance appraisal and pay-for-performance systems, and expanded developmental opportunities.

Preliminary results of OPM surveys and internal reviews indicate that managers and civilian personnel specialists perceive demo projects as being more flexible and responsive. Survey respondents have indicated that pay banding and simplified classification procedures are increasing the laboratory's ability to attract the best candidates and are changing the organization's culture from one of entitlement to one of performance.